

Gartner's Everything You Wanted to Know About Program Management

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For many organizations, "programs" are a challenge. Gartner has developed a collection of integrated, "foundational" research around program management. This Article Top View identifies all of this research, and maps each note against the Gartner program management life cycle.

ANALYSIS

Many organizations find the discipline of program management, and the planning and execution of these large-scale initiatives, to be challenging. In addition, the amount of specific information around program governance, formation, roles and execution that is readily available in the public domain is rather limited.

The evidence for program challenges is all too clear — for example, in the government domain. Watchdog agencies, such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in the U.S., warn of "billions at risk" (see Recommended Reading), and the Canadian parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts expresses a concern that: "... some large IT projects may not be well managed, thus putting substantial amounts of public funds at risk" (see Recommended Reading).

Organizations clearly need help with program management. They seek a variety of answers and look for templates and models that they can employ to increase their capabilities and reduce their risks in undertaking large and expensive initiatives. Discussions with Gartner clients reveal a well-worn set of questions and needs:

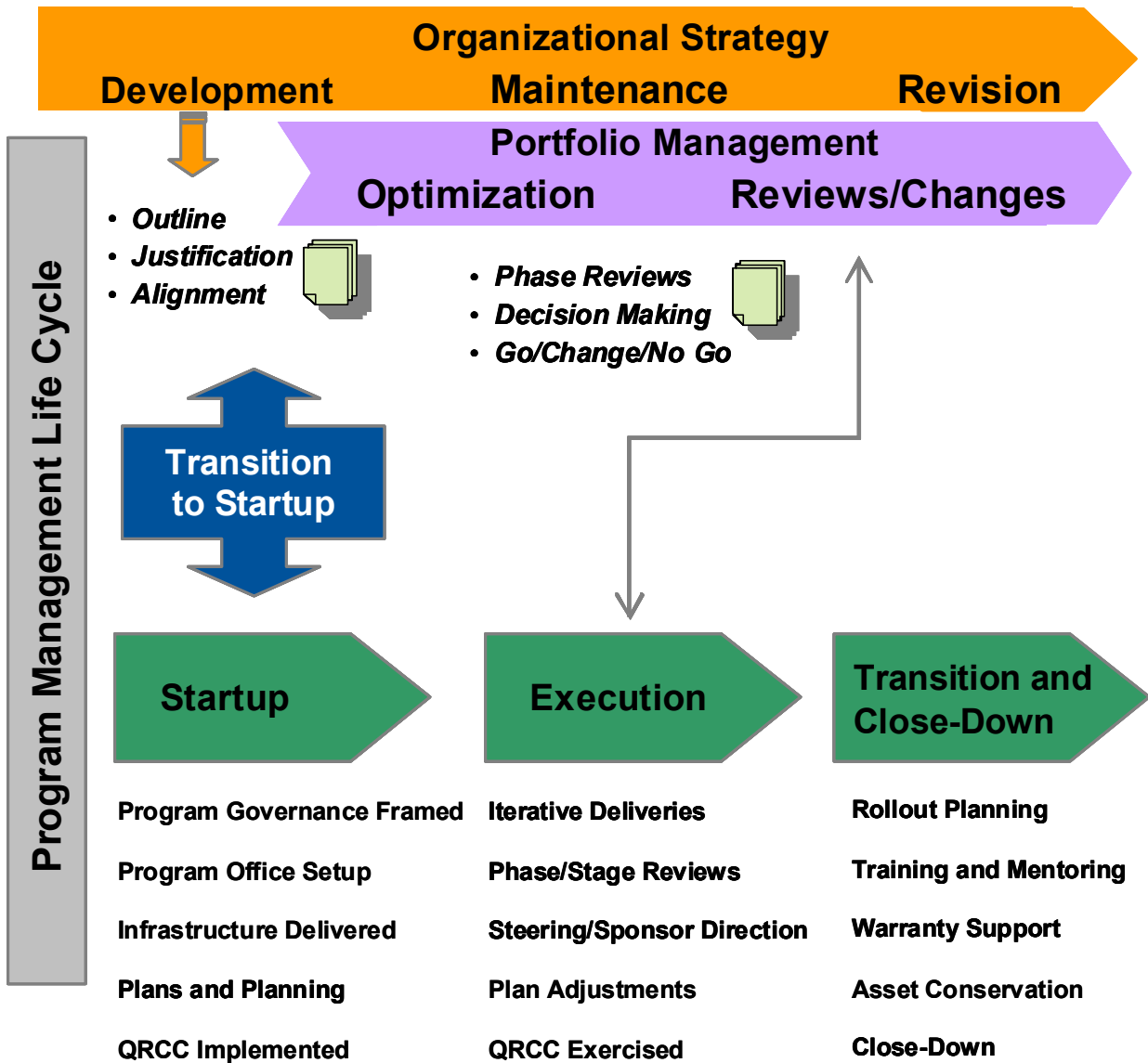
- What is a program office, how large should it be, and what roles should it include?
- What capabilities and skills should I expect in an experienced program manager?
- How can I handle the needs and the volume of communication within a program?
- Is planning a program the same as planning a project — only larger?
- How do I start a program?

Gartner has chosen to address the discipline of program management, using a program life cycle model as the organizing principle behind its research, and the "fit" of one note with another. The result is a continuously evolving collection of research on this important subject that is well-integrated. That is, work products and artifacts are consistently named and used from one piece of research to another. The contents "flow" from one to another, with work identified as planned and completed in one piece of research reused as input in another piece.

This Article Top View identifies the entire collection of current Gartner program management research in a single location, and provides references and links to the individual pieces of research. In addition, it provides a graphic "view" that maps the existing program management research against its phase and stage location in the Gartner-defined program life cycle model (see Figure 1).

As additional research that deals with program management is created and disseminated, this Article Top View will be amended to include them.

Figure 1. Gartner's Program Management Life Cycle



QRCC = quality, risks, compliance and controls

Source: Gartner (August 2009)

Program Management Research Notes

Research is, first, grouped by the life cycle component (shown in Figure 1) with which it is associated. Within these groups, the research notes are grouped in a logical order of work to be planned and executed.

Organizational Strategy (and Programs)

- "Program Management: Definition, Context and Content"

- "The Program Life Cycle"
- "Program 'Fit' Within Organizational Usages"
- "Identifying New Programs"
- "PMO Best Practices: Knowing When to Create Bottom-Up Programs"
- "Toolkit: Program Formation and How to Complete a Program Concept Document for Best Outcomes"
- "Leading and Structuring Programs: Avoiding Painful Lessons"
- "Toolkit: Program Manager Capabilities: The Gift of Excellence"
- "Who's Who in Program Management: An Overview of Roles"
- "Why Project Managers Do Not Always Make Good Program Managers"

Transition to Program Startup

- "Toolkit Sample Template: Transitioning to the Program Startup Stage"

Program Startup

- "Toolkit Sample Template: A Go or No-Go Checklist for Program Startup"
- "Toolkit: The Program Communication Strategy Oils the Wheels of Success"
- "The Program Office: An Essential Program Element"
- "Toolkit Sample Template: A Program Office Model"
- "Toolkit: Identifying and Classifying Program Risks"
- "Toolkit: Defining Program Control Domains and Their Priorities"

Program Execution

- "Toolkit: Delivering the Program Plan"
- "Toolkit: Mapping Cross-Project Program Dependencies"

Program Transition and Close-Down

- "Toolkit: Ending It All; Executing Program Close-Down"

Other Program Management Research

- "PMI's Revised Program Management Standard: Warmed-Over Project-Centric Content and Approaches"
- "Findings: The Many Flavors of Program Management"

RECOMMENDED READING

Information Technology: Management and Oversight of Projects Totaling Billions of Dollars Need Attention (GAO 09-624T), 28 April 2009

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